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Chairman: Miss DIOP (Senegal)
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of Mr. Piriz Ballon (Uruguay), Miss Diop, Vice-Chairman (Senegal), took the Chair

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 83: OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT (A/47/340, A/47/375-S/24429, A/47/391, 499 and 564)

(a) OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (A/47/419 and Add.1-3)

(b) UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (A/47/340; E/1992/28)

(c) UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (A/47/312-S/24238; E/1992/28)

(d) UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (A/47/264-E/1992/71; E/1992/29)

(e) WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME

1. Mrs. ULLOA (Ecuador) said that, with regard to the Secretary-General's Note on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities (A/47/419), structural difficulties combined with a chronic lack of resources had forced the United Nations to scale back its activities in areas essential to the developing countries, many of which continued to be debt burdened by unfavourable trade balances, high inflation and pervasive poverty.

2. The Joint Consultative Group on Policies was aware of the changes that must be made to ensure the effective implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211: more integrated and coordinated programming of United Nations system cooperation; strengthening of the resident coordinator role; harmonization of programming processes and maximum development of national capacities; change of focus from small-scale projects to more concentrated and integrated programmes; and improvements in the structure and composition of the United Nations presence at the country level. Her delegation endorsed that initiative.

3. Lack of coordination between the United Nations system and the various countries was hindering full implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211. Limited resources and lack of technical support had made it difficult for the United Nations to meet its obligations to the developing countries which, in turn, had seen their progress hindered by strict structural adjustment programmes. To compound the problem further, not every industrialized country had been able to provide the agreed level of official development assistance (0.7 per cent of its GNP), thus blocking the growth and development of the developing countries.

4. Ecuador was struggling energetically to overcome the crisis, and had adopted measures which were affecting its citizens harshly. However, the effort had to be a joint one, with the United Nations implementing the reforms

(Mrs. Ulloa, Ecuador)

called for in General Assembly resolution 44/211 and the industrialized countries making greater contributions to operational activities for development.

5. Mr. DJACTA (Algeria) said that the triennial review would enable the General Assembly to further strengthen operational activities for development, which represented a very important part of multilateral cooperation. The provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211 continued to be relevant; accordingly, it was important to maintain and strengthen activities designed to promote its implementation. At a time when the Organization was restructuring its economic and social sectors, it was worth emphasizing the need to realize the objectives of resolution 44/211 so that the United Nations system might participate in a more coherent, unified, coordinated and cooperative fashion.

6. His delegation believed that it would be premature to adopt a country strategy; in any event, such a strategy would be difficult to implement since there were certain pre-existing problems that were far from being resolved. For example, the programming cycles of the Organization's various institutions were widely disparate and procedures had yet to be harmonized, and the mechanisms of cooperation and coordination in the field were not fully operational. Moreover, political and financial support for operational activities must be consolidated, bearing in mind also that the developing countries' needs for technical assistance were evolving qualitatively and quantitatively.

7. He stressed the importance his delegation placed on decentralization and on giving resident coordinators more opportunities to exercise initiative and make decisions since they were the ones effectively responsible for the coherence of operational activities in the field. Finally, he welcomed the importance given to the role of science and technology in achieving development objectives in the developing countries and, in particular, the means by which science and technology could be integrated into United Nations programming in order to meet effectively the needs of the developing countries.

8. Mr. AKPLOGAN (Benin) said that although, following the events of recent years, the world was no longer divided into two blocs, it remained a world in which inequality of opportunities abounded. Faced with economic and financial difficulties, the developing countries had been obliged to embark on structural adjustment programmes but they still did not have the resources necessary for their development. The United Nations would need to play an increasingly important role in the economic and social sectors by mobilizing resources for the developing countries. Benin was receiving technical and financial assistance from the United Nations designed to strengthen its country's capacity to manage all phases of the development process.

9. Operational activities were being adapted to the new problems, perspectives and needs of the States Members of the United Nations and,

(Mr. Akplogan, Benin)

accordingly, different institutional mechanisms were being adopted. The diversity of governing bodies and mandates made it difficult for Member States to exercise consistent control. In addition, the resources mobilized for operational activities had not increased in real value and that sector's allotment of official development assistance had declined. Such assistance must be augmented, and the developed countries must make their political will clear by increasing their financial contribution to operational activities for development.

10. The growing interdependence of the various aspects of development, acknowledged in General Assembly resolution 44/221, required more unified action from all sectors of the United Nations system and a new approach in the programming of operational activities. His delegation believed that United Nations organizations must respond with a more cohesive presence at the national level in order to meet the needs of the developing countries. Accordingly, it supported more integrated and coordinated programming of cooperation activities; harmonization of programming processes at the country level; and a shift away from small projects to more concentrated and integrated programmes.

11. Stressing the usefulness of the resident coordinator system, he said that resident coordinators were indispensable for material and financial reasons, and were needed to enhance consistency in United Nations activities at the country level. The unified approach in the field should not, however, lead to a merger of the governing bodies of the main United Nations organs responsible for operational activities. It was more important to harmonize the programming cycles of all the development agencies, and simplify and unify procedures. At the country level, coordination should be up to the recipient country; United Nations support should consist of strengthening the institutions and the capacity of Governments to draw up and implement their development policies and programmes.

12. His delegation noted with satisfaction that UNDP had created a trust fund, known as "Capacity 21", which would be used to help the developing countries formulate and execute sustainable development policies and programmes. He urged the UNDP Governing Council to cooperate with the United Nations system in connection with the implementation of the United Nations new agenda for the development of Africa.

13. Mr. KIM (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the end of the cold war had not had a positive influence on the world economy or on international economic relations. That situation was adversely affecting the operational activities of the United Nations. The implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/211 depended on a substantial and urgent increase of financing; his delegation was concerned that the level of resources for operational activities had remained far below the actual requirements of developing countries.

14. Resident coordinators must be able to implement with neutrality,

(Mr. Kim, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

impartiality and cultural sensitivity the programmes by which the United Nations sought to meet a country's needs. To that end, the resident coordinator's tasks must be clearly spelled out. There was a great variety of procedures governing programme and project formulation, appraisal and monitoring, and that inhibited greater national participation in those processes. Simplification of those procedures would facilitate national participation, enhance efficiency and allow for better use of resources.

15. Since recipient countries had primary responsibility for coordinating external assistance, the United Nations should fully respect the right of those countries to choose their own modality when assisting them in setting priorities for development programmes; those priorities should be decided within the country programme context. The United Nations system should help developing countries strengthen their capacity to undertake national execution; in that regard, flexible mechanisms must be employed.

16. His delegation hoped that the triennial review of operational activities would serve as an occasion to facilitate integration of the recommendations of the Rio Conference throughout the United Nations system. Coming at a time when the United Nations was engaged in a restructuring of the economic and social field, reforms should not lead to a reduction of assistance to the developing countries. It was to be hoped that restructuring would give more credibility to the United Nations development system.

17. Mrs. RAHOLINIRINA RADAFIARISOA (Madagascar) said that her delegation noted with satisfaction the decision of the Economic and Social Council to establish an ad hoc working group to develop recommendations on enhancing international cooperation for development, with a view to introducing reforms aimed at ensuring that United Nations operational activities would be better adapted to the new challenges posed by the profound changes that had occurred throughout the world. In that regard, Madagascar supported the programme approach which, however, required certain clarifications and definitions. Its viability would depend, on the one hand, on its being adapted to the economic and social circumstances of the countries and on programming cycles being harmonized according to priorities and needs and, on the other hand, on the availability of technical and operational support to enable national institutions adequately to administer intersectoral and sectoral programmes.

18. As a beneficiary country, Madagascar recognized that it was responsible for managing programmes and projects financed by the United Nations system. However, its ability to fulfil that responsibility fully would depend on its national institutions being directly involved in programme execution. In that regard, there was the problem of how to make the best use of human resources through training, which was a vital element in promoting national execution. Her delegation therefore supported the report of the Secretary-General (A/47/419).

19. Given the multidisciplinary nature of operational activities, there must

(Mrs. Raholinirina Radafiarisoa, Madagascar)

be adequate coordination at the national level between the agencies of the United Nations system and the international and governmental bodies. The resident coordinators had an important role to play in that regard; that role must be spelled out so as to enable Governments to define their relations with them and with the representatives of other agencies. There must also be a better distribution of duties in the United Nations system so as to avoid duplication and overlapping. The resident coordinators also played a part in keeping the Governments informed regarding technical and scientific projects and their potential for enhancing development efforts.

20. The reforms already initiated with a view to improving the effectiveness and usefulness of operational activities would only be significant if substantial levels of resources were made available on a predictable basis. In allocating the resources, special attention must be paid to the least developed countries. The level of those resources would depend on the political will of the major donors, rather than on a new apportionment of assessments among Member States.

21. The serious problems currently facing developing countries should not change the consensus of 1970 on technical cooperation, the principles of which were still valid: neutrality, universality, non-conditionality, the voluntary and subsidized nature of activities, and the freedom and sovereignty of beneficiary countries in setting their objectives and priorities. Only respect for those principles could ensure a sound basis for international cooperation, which was indispensable in an increasingly interdependent world.

22. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) said that, in his view, there was consensus on the importance of overcoming duplication and overlapping of items and of optimizing the use of resources for development. It was necessary not only to rationalize the administration of resources, but also to adjust the design and application of programmes to the objectives desired. It was not enough to direct action mainly towards the material aspects of development. Operational activities must focus on investment in human resources and projects must be directed mainly at education, manpower training, instruction in the management of new technologies and public health. In a new international order, agencies should gear their priorities towards human development.

23. All operational activities must be adjusted to the transcendental changes that had recently occurred throughout the world, which had placed people at the centre of multilateral attention. In the triennial review process, programmes must be evaluated in the light of the new goals made necessary by those changes. To that end, the restructuring process must be brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and that would entail making substantive and formal changes with a view to overcoming existing problems. It was essential that the parties concerned be flexible in their positions, so as to make it possible to harmonize the different national needs with global interests.

24. His delegation attached great importance to the debate on the

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

strengthening of resident coordinators. Their work must guarantee full coordination between the agencies and enhanced national execution of programmes as well as allowing for optimum coordination of activities with governmental priorities and national development plans. That would make it possible to rationalize efforts, to optimize the human and financial resources of the system and to ensure that benefits had a multiplier effect.

25. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that, without wishing to detract in any way from the importance of other programmes and activities such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) or the World Food Programme (WFP), he would focus his observations mainly on UNDP. He shared the view that UNDP should increase its efforts to help developing countries develop their national capacity to undertake programmes and project management and execution.

26. The resources available to UNDP were clearly insufficient in relation to the growing needs of the developing countries; the Programme should therefore enjoy increased support from Governments. It was also to be hoped that more attention would be directed to the social and environmental aspects of sustained development, particularly within the framework of structural adjustment policies that should also stimulate economic growth. UNDP should play an important role in defining and promoting the concept of sustainable human development, taking into consideration national priorities. The implementation of Agenda 21 should be a priority for UNDP, whose network could be drafted into the service of the environment, as Israel had suggested at the Rio Conference. UNDP should be one of the main channels for the transfer of applied science and technology to developing countries and should concentrate on those branches of science and technology that might contribute directly to sustainable development. Specific efforts should focus on projects for agricultural development, including the development of arid and semi-arid zones, rural communities and water and energy resources.

27. Israel's approach to rural development problems was based on the notion that the development of human resources was a prerequisite for agricultural development. Israel's rapid economic development had been an integral element of the country's preoccupation with social progress. For more than three decades, Israel had shared its technical experience, bilaterally and multilaterally, with many countries throughout the world. Over 55,000 men and women had taken part in Israeli training programmes in Israel and abroad, and Israel had sent more than 10,000 advisers abroad to participate in the development of agriculture and health and social services, inter alia. Israeli experts had been personally involved in the establishment of institutions and production systems. Their work had provided both a pragmatic and theoretical understanding of the multifaceted process of development in other nations. Israel's own development had been facilitated by a strong infrastructure built around the country's universities and research institutions. Scientific and technological advances were immediately tested in the field by extension workers, who became familiar with applied uses of new technology through a well-organized extension service. The backbone of Israel's development cooperation programme was the belief that human resources

(Mr. Eliashiv, Israel)

were the most important asset. Israeli training programmes sought to inspire creativity and dedication in trainees, who went home to make breakthroughs while confronting specific local challenges.

28. Mr. CISSE (Senegal) said that his country had no doubt that the triennial review of operational activities would be of use in the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields on the basis of the recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, particularly the recommendation regarding the creation of a Commission on Sustainable Development. That would strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to act, and so contribute significantly to the achievement of development objectives during the 1990s.

29. Firm commitments were needed in the area of operational activities so that the supply of financing would be continuous, predictable and assured, in accordance with the needs of developing countries. Any reform should be accompanied by the capital those countries needed. However, it seemed far from certain that the 1990s would not be another lost decade for development. Official development assistance (ODA), which in the aggregate had remained at less than half of the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) set nearly 20 years before, was not only stagnating but threatening to decline. There had already been a perceptible negative effect on voluntary contributions for operational activities, and fewer projects had been approved, in particular those financed by UNDP. That went far in explaining the delay in implementing General Assembly resolutions 44/211 and 46/219. The question of financing should be at the heart of all recommendations made during the current session.

30. The human dimension of development was essential to the objectives of operational activities for the 1990s. It would be difficult for developing countries to take full responsibility for national execution of programmes in the absence of an integrated approach that strengthened national capacities and ensured that the people, and especially women, participated in the programming process. There was a need for strategies that would increase popular participation and lead to the adoption of programmes, methods and structures suited to the diverse economic, social, political and cultural conditions of each country.

31. Obviously, the programming and execution of operational activities were first and foremost the responsibility of developing countries and must be consistent with their national priorities, objectives and plans. There was thus a need for more integrated programming and for a harmonization and simplification of programming procedures for each country. Naturally, that would also entail an effort by the various country-level structures to coordinate and execute the programmes.

32. Senegal was pleased to note that the United Nations had endeavoured to harmonize its programming cycle with those of recipient countries. With regard to the integration of food aid in national sustainable development

(Mr. Cisse, Senegal)

strategies, the Secretary-General's report (A/47/419) did not supply detailed information, nor did it address the issue of self-sufficiency, which was nevertheless one of the main goals of operational activities for development in the 1990s.

33. His delegation considered that the effectiveness of operational activities at the national level depended on decentralization and the delegation of authority to the resident coordinator, who, as team leader, should have sufficient latitude to carry out his duties effectively. In that way, he would be responsible for formulating, executing and coordinating United Nations activities in the field. However, the use of an integrated approach in the field must reflect the fact that the country strategy was a multidisciplinary one and that reforms could be effective only if they took into consideration the comparative advantage of each process. Given the individual features of each fund or programme and its ability to mobilize resources, financing for the development of operational activities must continue to be the shared responsibility of the various United Nations organizations.

34. Mr. RAMADAN (Egypt) said that the triennial review of operational activities coincided with the discussion in progress on enhancing the effectiveness of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres, thereby heightening the importance of international cooperation for development. It should be emphasized, however, that the development process was the responsibility of Governments. The resident coordinator system should be strengthened both in the field and at headquarters, in order to improve coordination to benefit the developing countries. It would also be useful to take a more unified approach at the national level; the United Nations country strategy could improve coordination and lead to better use of resources available for operational activities.

35. Egypt was concerned by the current level of resources and renewed its appeal for an increase in ODA in order to reach the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of GNP. The current economic crisis had caused serious problems in the developing world, and in spite of the economic reform and structural adjustment programmes implemented by many developing countries, the unilateral efforts and scarce resources of those countries were insufficient to overcome them. Egypt, despite its problems and the needs generated by its reform programme, had decided to increase its contribution to the operational activities of the United Nations system by 10 per cent over the previous year, in order to strengthen those vital activities.

36. Egypt believed that military expenditures must be redirected towards the attainment of development objectives in developing countries and that military industries must be converted to industries for peaceful purposes.

37. Mr. LIMON (Suriname) said that while his delegation agreed with the content of the report of the Secretary-General on the triennial review of operational activities, the fundamental characteristics of those activities

(Mr. Limon, Suriname)

must be maintained. In addition, their universality, their voluntary and grant nature, their neutrality and multilateralism must be ensured, and their execution should benefit developing countries in accordance with their development plans, priorities and objectives.

38. Suriname appreciated the focus on human resource development and agreed that it was essential to improve access for all, in particular for those most in need, to food, water, housing, health care and education as a basis for human development.

39. The shift from a project to a programme approach required the participation of Governments in the execution of activities, in order to achieve greater coherence and impact, and the harmonization of programming cycles of the various agencies with those of Governments.

40. The effectiveness of operational activities also depended on the availability of the necessary human resources and expertise in recipient countries, as well as on government participation in programme execution. Thus national capacity-building was essential if recipient country resources were to be utilized and strengthened in programme execution.

41. Mr. RAICHEV (Bulgaria) said that the United Nations had the potential to cope with the magnitude and complexity of the changes taking place in the sphere of social and economic development; Bulgaria commended the efforts to establish human-centred development and to find new forms of effective cooperation to meet countries' needs through a comprehensive and integrated approach that would enable the Organization to respond to the growing demands for assistance, utilizing its comparative advantage.

42. The basic principles contained in General Assembly resolution 44/211 should serve as a basis for further reforms in programming and the full utilization of national capacities. Both donor and recipient countries should further strengthen the operational activities of the United Nations system by preserving their universality, neutrality and voluntary nature. It was also necessary to make those activities more efficient and to coordinate them with other multilateral and bilateral arrangements.

43. His delegation shared the view that technical cooperation must be incorporated into national development efforts and that Governments had the primary responsibility for effective programme execution. In that context, attention should be focused on the development and strengthening of national capacities for the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of technical cooperation programmes and activities as a prerequisite for national execution; however, that modality should not exclude the utilization of the experience and knowledge of the specialized agencies and regional commissions.

44. Global integration and rapid scientific and technological advances required more flexible programming of technical cooperation. Greater interdependence called for a more coherent multisectoral response in order to

(Mr. Raichev, Bulgaria)

solve problems effectively. The shift from a project to a programme approach was therefore commendable, although individual projects should not be entirely abandoned where they yielded positive results. In that regard, UNDP might still wish to consider funding some regional projects of proven usefulness that were supported by recipient and donor countries.

45. The decentralization of activities and authority would help to meet the needs of recipient countries more effectively and strengthen coordination with Governments. The new United Nations office at Sofia would help to increase and enhance cooperation between Bulgaria and various United Nations agencies.

46. He commended efforts to coordinate UNDP activities with those of United Nations executing agencies and other specialized agencies outside the system. However, other opportunities might be found to facilitate greater UNDP involvement in projects and programmes financed from various sources and closer cooperation between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions.

47. Bulgaria welcomed United Nations efforts to take a new approach to technical cooperation activities and hoped that those measures would promote the achievement of the development objectives and priorities of recipient countries. Bulgaria also commended the support provided to countries undergoing the transition to a market economy and democracy. Developments in Central and Eastern Europe posed tremendous challenges, but the United Nations, on the basis of the principle of universality, should respond to the needs for assistance of all countries without decreasing its assistance to the least developed countries. The ongoing process of restructuring United Nations activities in the social and economic sector would enhance the Organization's effectiveness and efficiency and would make it more responsive to the challenges of development.

48. Mr. GOUMENNY (Ukraine) said that the current debate on operational activities for development was taking place amid a new phase in the development of the social and economic sectors of the United Nations. The general decision to restructure and intensify the system's activities beginning with operational activities could lead to the adoption of concrete measures which would significantly strengthen the Organization's authority.

49. The documents before the Committee, in particular the comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system (A/47/419), showed that the international community had been prepared to implement the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/211. However, it must be agreed that the attainment of the objectives set forth in the resolution would require much more time, greater imagination, more intensive efforts and the allocation of more resources than initially envisaged.

50. Many delegations had arrived at similar conclusions and made similar assessments. As there had not been wide differences of opinion with respect to the methods of restructuring, it could be assumed that agreement on reform

(Mr. Goumenny, Ukraine)

could quickly be reached. As far as resolution 44/211 was concerned, its provisions were still valid and its full implementation would consolidate the principles of universality, multilateralism and non-conditionality of operational activities.

51. The work of the different bodies of the United Nations should be structured to reflect the positive political changes taking place in the world, the growing interdependence of States and the globalization of the economy; the basis for that effort should be the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and the related International Development Strategy as it had been conceived for the decade beginning in 1991. Such cooperation work should do its utmost, basically in the Eastern and Central European countries, to alleviate their serious environmental and economic problems.

52. After praising the Secretary-General's report entitled Activities of the United Nations System in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States (A/47/419/Add.3), prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/40, and reaffirming the importance of an integrated United Nations system approach to that region, he noted that one of the initial benefits of such an approach would be the establishment of an integrated United Nations office in the country in conformity with an agreement which had already been signed between the national Government and the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He expressed the hope that the future office, headed by a resident coordinator, would be a main channel of technical assistance to Ukraine and would serve to attract external financial resources to the country.

53. After stressing the decision of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to grant Ukraine, among other countries in transition, the status of a recipient of assistance and beneficiary of programmes under the fifth programming cycle, he said that UNDP should also coordinate special assistance programmes for Ukraine as part of the decentralization of operational activities and strengthening of the country approach. Moreover, different United Nations agencies represented in Ukraine would share common facilities which would improve the efficiency of the work of the integrated United Nations office and reduce its initial establishment cost.

54. The report of the mission on the crisis and the changes made in order to meet human needs was a penetrating and accurate analysis of the situation in Ukraine with respect to health care in general and maternal and child health in particular. Its recommendations deserved to be taken into consideration in specific practical programmes. Ukraine attached the greatest importance to the activities of UNICEF for mothers and children and would be gratified if the assistance programmes developed at the World Summit for Children were also applied to the children affected by the Chernobyl disaster. Both the work of UNICEF and that of UNDP must form a significant part of the activities developed by the integrated United Nations office in the area of technical assistance to Ukraine.

55. Mr. NAADJIE (Ghana) said that the comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system provided an opportunity to undertake a comprehensive review of the entire process by which the United Nations system delivered technical assistance to developing countries and to consider the main reasons why it had not been possible to implement General Assembly resolution 44/211. There was no doubt that the difficulties pointed out in the Secretary-General's note (A/47/419) could be tackled. However, it should be stressed that the introduction of fundamental reforms into a system composed of many organizations could defeat the very purpose of the reforms if it was not pursued with some circumspection.

56. The enhanced interdependence of the various dimensions of development required greater coherence of action by the United Nations system. The United Nations had been able to help many developing countries implement national strategies in human development, including the advancement of women, poverty eradication programmes, population and other social and economic priority programmes. Indeed, new approaches to the programming of operational activities were required if the United Nations system was to be effective in meeting its challenges. General Assembly resolution 44/211 had recognized the new dimensions of development when it called for more integrated and coordinated programming of United Nations cooperation processes.

57. The inadequacy of financial resources to fund operational activities in developing countries had been an important obstacle to implementation of projects and programmes needed to promote their economic development. In its Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular, the revitalization of the economic growth and development of the developing countries, contained in the annex of its resolution S-18/3, the General Assembly had called for special concessionary resources to enable the developing countries, especially the least developed countries, to cope with the challenges of the 1990s. Developed countries had been urged to devote 0.7 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) to official development assistance (ODA) and 0.15 per cent of GNP as ODA for the least developed countries. The first target had proved unattainable, while the second had, in most cases, not been achieved.

58. The report of the Secretary-General (A/47/419) referred to the advancement of a genuine international consensus on development cooperation. He hoped that would lead to increased contributions to the operational activities for development.

59. With the reaffirmation of the importance of human development by the United Nations system had come qualitative changes in its operational activities. As regarded the programme approach, the lack of a precise definition of the term and the conceptual differences among the various agencies had affected programming activities and caused delays in the approval of programmes. However, the shift from a project approach to a programme approach was widely welcomed by recipient and donor countries because it was adapted to specific country requirements.

(Mr. Naadjie, Ghana)

60. His delegation was hopeful that the current triennial review would address the obstacles to a full implementation of that programme approach to the development needs of developing countries. National execution continued to be an important modality, as was national capacity-building through the use of local consultants and the return of talent.

61. The coordination of the operational activities of the United Nations system was still a source of concern. For those activities to be effective, and for the delivery system to achieve maximum impact, it was essential to consult with recipient Governments and to strengthen the role of the resident coordinators. Lastly, the Committee had the task of putting forward proposals and recommendations that would provide clear guidance on the matter. General Assembly resolution 44/211 laid out a framework within which at least some of the aspirations of developing countries could be met. The experience gained from reviewing the implementation of that resolution should allow a critical but constructive look at operational activities in the context of a changing world, in order to achieve the rationalization, coordination and harmonization of the activities of all agencies of the United Nations system.

62. Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) said that the first goal of operational activities was to help the developing countries to build or strengthen their national capacity and to take advantage of the scientific and technical knowledge available within and outside of the United Nations system, within the context of their national development plans and strategies.

63. It was unfortunate to note that the total resources available for operational activities were not enough to meet the growing needs of the developing countries, which had to confront poverty, population growth and environmental deterioration in an international climate marked by the debt crisis and rising protectionism. The donor community must therefore increase its contributions in an adequate and predictable way and the funds available must be put to better use by eliminating duplication of work, inappropriate priorities and excessive administrative costs. The UNDP report on human development had made it clear that official development assistance funds used to meet essential human needs like basic education, primary health care, clean water supply and sanitation services, family planning and nutrition came to no more than 6.5 per cent of bilateral assistance and 9.9 per cent of multilateral assistance. Other studies showed that only 25 per cent of the multilateral technical cooperation funds actually reached the developing countries; the remaining 75 per cent went to the international organizations in the form of administrative costs or returned to the developed countries in the form of consultancy fees and equipment costs.

64. The project approach entailed a complex procedure involving transactions between the technical departments of the beneficiary Government and the organizations of the United Nations system. The result of such transactions was a compilation of projects known as the country programme, in which the wish to satisfy the various requests prevailed over the need to ensure a coherent whole, with the hope that the cumulative effect of the projects would

(Mr. Amaziane, Morocco)

necessarily be beneficial. Actually, experience had shown that those small projects hardly affected the general development of the recipient country because they were not integrated into its national strategy.

65. His delegation welcomed the fact that the project approach would henceforward be replaced by another known as the programme approach, which would make operational activities more coherent by reducing the wastage engendered by a multiplicity of projects. The Joint Consultative Group on Policy was making laudable efforts to develop more specific terminology and concepts having to do with taking the programme approach.

66. The system of resident coordinators, as now set up, did not permit proper coordination of operational activities or offer a comprehensive, multidisciplinary response to the needs of recipient countries. In fact, the resident coordinators were compelled to carry out a great variety of tasks with minimal human and financial resources. Furthermore, the fact that they worked for UNDP often kept them from being able to count on staff support from the field offices of other agencies of the United Nations system. For all those reasons, Morocco approved of the establishment of common facilities that operated in an integrated way, and endorsed the idea of giving the resident coordinator greater authority, in order to make technical cooperation activities more relevant to the situation in the countries. Moreover, experience had shown that Headquarters approval procedures often caused delays and unduly weakened the decision-making power of the representatives in the field.

67. The principle of national execution was taking hold throughout the developing world. His delegation was surprised that some considered it a threat to the technical function of the specialized agencies. When a country had the necessary technical capacity, the specialized agencies should devote themselves to providing the experience and resources that were needed to increase its expertise.

68. Despite the progress made, the Secretary-General recognized in his report that the diversity and multiplicity of procedures followed by the United Nations in formulating, evaluating and supervising programmes and projects impeded national execution. Consequently, he recommended that those procedures should be harmonized and simplified. Evaluation criteria should be established to determine the extent to which a project contributed to reinforcing national action in a given sector. Lastly, his delegation believed that the provisions of resolution 44/211 still applied, even though they were so complex that several years would be needed to implement it as a whole.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.